

# Hunting Leases



## Tennessee Department of Agriculture, Division of Forestry

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Landowners can generate income and get some help in policing and protecting their land from trespass and vandalism by leasing it for hunting.

Hunting leases average \$2 per acre for tracts over 150 acres and \$4 per acre for less than 150 acres. Prime waterfowl areas can bring \$7 to \$8 per acre or more. However, markets are highly localized, and the price a lease will bring depends on many factors, including

- location
- amount of land
- amount, quality and species of game
- services provided (15% of leases include accommodations other than camping)
- nature of the agreement (time period covered, land management, special provisions such as reserving the family's right to hunt.)

Often, land is leased for enough money to pay the taxes.

Small, odd, isolated fields may very likely produce a greater financial return from hunting than from agriculture.

Landowners with small acreage can join with neighbors to offer a larger block of land.

The primary species hunted under leases are deer, rabbit, turkey, raccoon, quail, duck, geese and grouse. Habitat can be improved to increase populations and hunting success.

It is desirable to have some idea of the numbers of the game animals present. This can be done in a general way by referring potential leasees to the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) county wildlife technical reports, and to the local wildlife officer who will know which areas of the county carry the most game. Some forestry/wildlife management consultants will perform population surveys for individual ownerships. However, these are very time consuming and are subject to many variables.

Hunters who lease land know they have a place to go. They feel greater ease and safety, and they feel they have a higher chance of success. The quality of the hunting experience is as important to many hunters as hunting success. Surroundings, exclusive use of the land, availability of game, and services

provided all contribute to a quality hunting experience.

7.5% of hunters currently lease private land, A similar number (18,000) who are not leasing are "very interested," and another 14% are "somewhat interested." Most share a lease with up to 6 or 7 people. As more "no trespassing" signs go up on private land, leasing is becoming a more attractive option for hunters.

Leasing has two drawbacks. The most serious is liability. "Hold harmless" agreements are generally ineffective. Landowners should take out liability insurance if they want to protect against the unlikely event of a lawsuit from a hunter. Ten percent of leasing landowners carry liability insurance. A second and easily resolved question is family hunting rights. If the leasing family intends to continue hunting on the land, this should be specified in the agreement.

Advertising can be done by word of mouth, in newspapers, on bulletin boards, and through the Tennessee Private Lands Hunting Register. See your county Extension office to sign up.

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